**Spelling Strategies**

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| **Strategies for solving words** |

Students should be encouraged to reflect on their learning and the strategies they apply in the spelling process (metacognition). Students need to develop the language to talk about their learning. These strategies should be explicit taught and constantly referred to in the classroom.

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| **How do I spell a new word?**   * Think about meaning. Does it give you any clues to spelling patterns? * Say the word slowly listen carefully. Write the word syllable-by-syllable. Make sure you have represented each sound with a letter or letters. Look carefully to see if the pattern looks right * Try different patterns that might be right * See if you know another word which is similar * Ask yourself what it means * Begin with the base word |

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| ***Have-a-go strategy*:**  Do I know this word?  How many syllables can I hear?  Do I know any other words that sound almost the same?   How are those words written?   Does this word I have written look right?  I'll try it again.  Does this look better?   I'll write the part I am sure of and leave a blank for the difficult part. I will try different ways to fill in the blank. |

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| ***Talk to yourself chart***  The word is......  Stretch the word..... I hear the sounds.....  I see ......letters.  The spelling pattern is......  The vowel says.......  Another word like...... is ........ |

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| **Strategies for learning new words** |

Brainstorm ideas children use to learn new words. Give time and practice to develop some of the following strategies.

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| **Questions to help you learn how to spell new words:**  Does the meaning of the word help you with the spelling?  Is it a word you can break into parts (or syllables), such as 'temp/er/a/ture'?  Is it a word you can use a spelling hint (*Gimmick*) for, such as:  'a piece of pie',  'you hear with your ear'  or 'necessary has one collar and two socks'?  Does the word have other words inside it?  It may be a compound word, such as 'football'  or it may be a base-word with added letters, such as 'dresser'.  Can you sound the word out easily?  Can you change the pronunciation of the word to help you with the spelling?  For example, emphasising the 'n' sound in the word 'government' would mean that you would be less likely to leave the 'n' out.  Is it a word that you may just have to learn by using the Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check method? |

Brainstorm with the group the things you think make a good speller.   
Place these on a chart in your classroom

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| Spelling Words image | **Helpful hints for remembering spelling words**   * Picture the word in your head * Paint the word on your eyelids * Paint the word on an easel in your head, use yellow/red * Look at the word: Say the letters/sounds as you write the word * Break the word into syllables * Look, say, cover, write, check * Look closely at the tricky parts * Make a story up about the word  eg *was "*What a surprise*"* * Freckle words - look for the word in your reading and writing * Practise the word by writing with your finger on your other hand   Brainstormed by children in a Year 1/2 class |

It is not just important to teach knowledge **about** words but to include teaching of strategies of **how to learn** words. Students must be taught how to learn words and how to check spelling of words they have attempted.

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| **More strategies for learning words:** |

*Look Say Cover Write Check*

* Look at the word
* Say the word
* Cover the word
* Write and say the word
* Check the word

(You could add another step to this)   
Trace and say the word   
Write the word from memory and check it.

*Camera*

* Use your eyes like a camera. Take a picture of this word
* Close your eyes and imagine you can still see the word
* Trace the letters in the air with your eyes closed
* What colour are the letters in your mind?
* Imagine the letters have changed colour. What colour are they now?
* Open your eyes and write the word on your paper
* Now check your spelling with the word on the card

*Visual imagery*

* Look at the word
* Close your eyes and imagine you can see the word as you say it
* Name the letters from left to right
* Open your eyes and write the word
* Check against the model
* Repeat if necessary until the word can be recalled easily

*Syllables*

* Analyse the words into syllables

*Analogy*

* Think of other words with the same letter pattern

*Motor Habit*

* Include letter strings in handwriting lessons. Research indicates that linking the letters of letters strings assists recall of these patterns.

*Cluster Analysis Glass Analysis*   
Glass analysis focuses on letter clusters, for example, the cluster 'eigh' taken from words in progress. Ask:  
In the word weigh -

Which letter stands for the /a/ sound?   
Children reply 'e' 'i' 'g' 'h' says /a/ in 'weigh'  
  
Which letter stands for the /w/ sound?   
Children reply 'w' says /w/ in the word 'weigh'   
  
In the word 'neighbour' which sound does the letter 'n' stand for?  
Which sound do the letters 'eigh' stand for?   
Children reply 'e' 'i' 'g' 'h' says /a/ in 'neighbour'

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| **Phonetic strategies  Sound/symbol strategies** You can read or write some words by thinking about the sounds |

(Taken from Bolton & Snowball (1993) *Teaching Spelling: A Practical Re*source, Heinemann.)   
  
To spell any unknown word that has not been seen before the writer may try to represent the sounds heard in the word. Beginning writers rely heavily on this strategy because they do not yet know a lot about written language. Experienced writers may use this strategy first and then try to apply other aspects they know about written language.

**Example 1**   
The beginning writer who is aware of representing the sounds in a word may write the word *said* as S or SD or SED.  
  
**Example 2**   
An older writer who can apply many strategies may attempt an unknown word such as *phagocyte* as *fagosite* or *fagasite* or *phagasite*. Then they would apply knowledge about its meaning (a special type of blood cell), decide the spelling is more likely to be *phagocyte* (because other science words end with *cyte*) and then use a dictionary to check the correct spelling.

**To develop sound symbol strategies:**

* Teach students that letter-sound correlation is different in different words.   
  Students need to learn that:

One letter can represent a number of sounds; eg. c**a**t, **a**ble, c**ar**, prob**a**ble, **a**pp**a**rent, f**a**ther, **a**ny;   
  
The same sound can be represented by different letters; eg. **a**t**e**, r**ay**, r**ai**n, ob**ey**, st**ea**k, v**ei**l, g**au**ge, r**ei**gn, ball**et**.



* Teach students an awareness of onset and rime (eg tr-uck; sh-op; p-et)
* Sort words according to spelling patterns - strings or clusters of letters which occur in many words sharing common sound units (eg *ite/ight*)



* Teach children to listen to the order of sounds in a word and represent these with a letter or letters in the correct sequence. Map sounds into Word Frames or Elkonin boxes.

If a child asks for the spelling of ‘***jumped’***, the teacher might prepare a frame to help the child fill in as many letters as possible.

Word Frame image

Teachers can ask:   
What is the very first sound you hear?   
  
Do you know what letter can be used for that sound?   
  
In which box do you think it should be written?

* Teach phonemic awareness through shared book sessions - rhyme, alliteration and syllables. For example: *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox can be used as the basis for tongue twisters such as, ’*The* *precious possum has a piece of pavlova in Perth.’* This could be followed by reading the rhyme, ‘Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater’ and further 'p' words could be collected.

[http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/images/top.gif](http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/spellstrat.htm#top)

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| **Visual strategies**  You can read or write some words by thinking about the way they look |

Sometimes the writer remembers what a word looks like, or will try a word several ways and then decide which way looks the best. Sometimes they will recognise particular visual patterns of letters and know that some are acceptable patterns in the English language but others are not. They may know that a particular word is likely to have the same spelling pattern as another known word.  **Example 1**   
To spell the word *cake* the writer may think of the spelling of words such as *take* and *bake* and presume it will have the same spelling pattern and then possibly check with a dictionary or wordbook.  
  
**Example 2**   
To spell the word *misspell* the writer may think that *mispell* looks better than *misspell***,** but another strategy will need to be applied, such as adding a prefix to a base word (*mis/spell*)

**To develop visual strategies:**

* Teach students to look for highly predictable patterns or letter sequences of English. Encourage children to make associations with words of similar patterns. Focus on sequential letter patterns. Group words that contain common patterns; eg **other** br**other**, m**other**, b**other.** Word sorting and categorising activities are useful.
* Teach students that words must not only sound right, but they must also look right
* Choose a high frequency word to focus on each week. Every time a child reads or writes the word they are allowed to place a coloured dot on the word. This word can also be used as a screen saver for the week.

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| In this Prep/1 class the word of the week is placed on each table, so children can easily access it to place a dot. | |
| This child has found the word in the book they were reading. | Visual Strategies image |

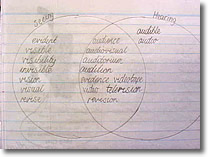
* Identify the critical features of words whenever children are shown how to spell a word, (i.e. the most significant features in the word and the pattern) Then encourage them to write the word from memory, not by copying. See [**Spelling Journals**](http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/implementing.htm#journals)
* Collect words. Regardless of sound, collect according to visual patterns. When you have a collection, you classify them according to sound or pattern.   
  For example:  
  'ough' or 'crack**ed** hop**ed** plann**ed** cri**ed**'   
  double consonants 'll', 'bb', 'tt' (Try to have vowel plus consonant cluster 'ell, ill all')

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| **Morphemic (meaning) strategies** You can read or write some words by thinking about what they mean Spelling is related to meaning rather than sound. |

**Example 1**   
To spell a word such as *somebody* the writer should use knowledge about the spelling of ‘some’ and/or ‘body’ and realise that a compound word will have the same spelling because it has the same meaning base.

**Example 2**   
To spell words such as *unnecessary (un/necessary)* or *commitment (commit/ment)* the writer should use knowledge about adding prefixes or suffixes to base words.  
  
**Example 3**   
To spell words such as *hopped, budgeted, carried, troubled, panicked* the writer should use knowledge of generalisations about how to add suffixes to base words.  **Example 4**   
To spell words such as *pasteurisation* the writer should apply knowledge about how the word was derived. In this case it is from a person's name (Louis *Pasteur*). There are many words where the origin of the word provides valuable information about the spelling. This is often referred to as etymological knowledge.  
  
In English language, most words that have the same meaning-base are spelt the same. If the meaning is different, then the spelling is different. The way a word is written (orthography) reflects meaning. In this way we can go straight to the deep structure or meaning of written texts without sounding-out the words. For example; *sign* and *signature* have related spellings and related meanings, while *seen* and *scenery* have different meanings and different spellings.   
  
To develop meaning based strategies:

* Teach children word meanings and derivations; eg. **graph**ics, **graph**ology, tele**graph** or **sign**, **sign**al, re**sign.** Teach base word and its derived forms e.g. Latin '**medica**': **medica**l, **medic**, **medic**ine (teach the pattern as word is tied to meaning rather than sound.)  
  Ask: why is *medicine* spelt like the following words? *medical, medico, medication.* This encourages students to think about the word meanings as a problem-solving approach to working out the connections between words.



**Latin Roots**

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| Aqua - water | Aquatic, aqueduct |
| Audio - I hear | Audience, audible |
| Centurn - a hundred | Century, centipede, centimetre, cent |
| Duo - two | Dual, duet |
| Luna - moon | Lunar, lunatic |
| Malus - bad | Maltreat, malaria |
| Mare - sea | Marine, submarine |
| Mikros - small | Microscope, micro-organism |
| Terra - the earth | Territory, terrier |
| Pedis - foot | Pedestrian, pedal |
| Magnus - great | Magnify, magnificent, magnitude |
| Unus - one | Unicycle, unicorn |
| Sentio - I feel | Sentiment, sentimental |

**Greek roots**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aster - a star | Astrology, asterisk |
| Hudor - water | Hydrant, hydrofoil, hydrogen |
| Metron - measure | Barometer, thermometer |
| Okto - eight | Octopus, octagon |
| Tele - far | Telescope, telephone |
| Thermos - hot | Thermometer, thermostat |

* Teach students to use morphemic knowledge, because this will also help them to recall spelling. Morphemes are units of meaning. *Dissolve* contains two morphemes *dis* and *solve*, and thus has a double ‘*s*’. *Disappear* only has one ‘*s*’ because the two morphemes are *dis* and *appear.*
* Practise word building - base words and prefixes and suffixes that are added to these
* Introduce **word association** — start with a word morpheme and build an ever — growing set of branches where the new word is related to the previous word
* Teach knowledge of word structure; eg past tense  
  want-**ed**/ sounds **id**  
  bang-**ed**/sounds **d**  
  pick-**ed**/sounds **t**  
  The common element is **ed**, which signals the past tense

Ask: why do all these words end with 'ed'?   
How many different sounds does 'ed' represent in these words?

* Teach other meaning knowledge through suffixes.  
  For example '-er' suffix  
  Write these words on cards:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| reporter photographer teacher | computer pointer heater | fatter skinnier greater | cover never master |

1. Place randomly along whiteboard; say words; ask students what "chunk" they have in common.  
  
2. Arrange words in 4 columns as above. Ask, ‘Why have I put them in these groups?’ If students need help, say, ‘In one group the words are all for people who do something.’ ‘In another group the words are all things that do something.’  
  
3. Explain and label the columns:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **People who do something** | **things that do something** | **More** | **Last chunk** |
| reporter photographer teacher | computer pointer heater | fatter skinnier greater | cover never master |

4. Add other words to the appropriate columns

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| after winter murderer runner | richer under manger diaper | fighter heavier copier writer | winner air conditioner dish washer typewriter |

Other suffixes  
  
-tion (same applies for 'ment')

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doing verb** | **Thing done  noun** | **Last chunk** |
| collect elect attract | collection election attraction | nation fraction vacation |

-sion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doing verb** | **Thing done  noun** | **Last chunk** |
| confuse extend invade provide collide | confusion extension invasion provision collision | tension mission vision  passion |

Adapted by David Hornsby, taken from Cunningham (2000) *Phonics They Use* Addison Wesley.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Suffix** | **Meaning** | **Example** | **Non-example** |
| -ly | In that manner | happily steadily briefly | assembly family ugly |
| -or | Person who or Thing which | inspector generator accelerator | mirror horror |
| -ist | person | scientist artist | consist exist |
| -ance | State of/act of | tolerance ignorance | balance romance |
| -ment | development argument | document moment |
| -ness | laziness blindness | witness harness |
| -ant | Related to | tolerant ignorant | assistant elephant |
| -end | violent confident | incident urgent |
| -ive | creative active | motive adjective |
| -ous | nervous malicious | curious delicious |
| -al | comical memorial | animal initial |

Adapted by David Hornsby, from Cunningham, P. (2000) *Phonics They use* Addison Wesley.

* Teach students about compound words. Try sorting compound words according to the following categories.

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| B is of A (Eyebrows are brows of eyes) eg. backyard, snowflake, eardrum, milkshake |
| B is from A (Sheepskin is skin from a sheep) eg. beeswax, pancake, moonlight, seaweed |
| B is for A (A dustpan is a pan for dust) eg. bathroom, bookcase, playground, notebook |
| B is like A (A ponytail is a tail like a pony's) eg. Batman, houseboat, grasshopper |
| B is A (A pipeline is a line that is pipe) eg. gentleman, bluebird |

* Provide grids for compound patterns (similar to the one illustrated), for students to develop patterns using compound words.



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| **Reference to authority** Students need to learn to use resources to help them obtain the correct spelling and to learn more about words. |

* Model consulting an authority and encourage students to consult an authority (a dictionary, word wall or a good speller) when they are unsure if spelling is correct.
* Dictionary skills need to be taught and systematically reinforced throughout the primary years. For example, develop an understanding of:

Alphabetic order, Function of guidewords at the top of dictionary pages, Words being listed under the root word eg ‘paint’, ‘painting’

* [**Word wall**](http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/implementing.htm#walls) activities familiarise children with the words on the wall and ensure it becomes a resource for spellin

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| **Connection strategies** |

As word solvers students have categories for words in their head. As they meet unfamiliar words, they connect the unfamiliar words to those categories. Teachers need to help students expand the categories by making connections among words and drawing out important principles that they know.   
  
One useful strategy to assist students make links between the words they are learning and those already known is outlined in the following chart.    
  
**Make connections**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sounds like (Have some of the same sounds) | | **Write your words  arrow image** | Looks like (other words are spelled the same way) | |
| swell street | switch sweep | sweet | beet feet | swim |
| green keel heal |  | feel | peel wheel |  |
| chin leak | chest | cheek | week seek |  |
| was wind | her  father | water | later |  |
| but wetter | brother | better | letter |  |
| jar lump mother |  | jumper | bumper |  |

(Adapted from Fountas, I & Pinnell, G (1998) *Word matters: teaching phonics and spelling in the reading/writing classroom* Heinemann.)

Connections can be made with meanings, as in word association.

**Memory Joggers/Gimmicks/Mnemonics**Most people have difficulty remembering how to spell particular words and they devise something that will help overcome this. As students learn about memory aids and share them they may like to make a class book for the class library. Students may also record the ones they find useful in a personal spelling book.

Some useful memory aids:

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| they | They is **the** word I can spell |
| separate | Always smell **a rat** when you spell separate |
| piece | a **pie**ce of **pie** |
| quite/quiet | **Silent** ends with the letter **t** and **quiet** ends with the letter **t** |
| here/hear | You **hear** with your **ear** |
| They're/their | Both words begin with **the** and the word **here** is in the word **there** |
| Two/too/to | **Two** is related in meaning to **tw**in and **tw**ice. **Too** means **also**. There is also another letter **o** or **more than** (more than one letter **o**) |
| Currant/current | There is an **ant** eating the curr**ant** bun. So **currant** is the food and **current** is the flowing of the tide or river. |
| practice/practise | **Ice** is a noun, so pract**ice** is a noun and practise is a verb |
| principal/principle | The princi**pal** is your **pal** |
| because | **B**etty **e**ats **c**ake **a**nd **u**ncle **S**am's **e**ggs |
| accommodation | There are two **c**aravans and two **m**otels |
| few | **f**ew **e**lephants **w**ink |
| friend | **fri** the **end** of your **friend** |
| where, here, there, everywhere | Place names all have **here** in them |
| who, where, when, why, what | Questions begin with '**wh**' |
| Meat/meet | I like to **eat** meat |
| Stationary/stationery | A c**ar** is stationary |
| island | An island **is land** |